Overview of the ROMANIAN and SPANISH Approaches on the Tourism Economic Impact Measurement Methods

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ABSTRACT
The tourism activities have a real impact on the social and economic development, as it has great contributions to the GDP formation and the role it employs on the labor market. The economic branch of tourism has been and still is playing an important role in the economy as a whole, at macro level. The degree of importance has grown or diminished over the years, yet it certainly proved itself to be a notable factor of economic growth, no matter the level. Also, the tourism sector maintains codependent relationships with other sectors, mutually sustaining themselves, like transportation or lodging. The tourism sector as a whole is greatly characterized by a strong presence of and dependence on the labor force. It creates new work places, this way attracting the work force surplus from other sectors, which consequently has a good impact on reducing the unemployment rate. The high number of the people employed in the tourism domain could be mainly explained by the scarce possibilities of mechanization and automatisation of the tourism activities and operations. Also, one shouldn't forget the indirect effect that the increasing number of employed people has on other sectors. Studies in this field reveal that one work place in tourism can create up to three other work places in the economic frame. That is precisely why tourism, being as it is a great consumer of goods and services, has a beneficial influence on the number of employees in its "supplying" economic branches: agriculture, Food and Beverage, constructions, etc
The tourism impact measurement methods are every time more efficient and more accurate. Yet, because these measurement methods differ from one country to another, it is extremely difficult to conclude analyzes between tourism destinations worldwide, in terms of tourism economic impact.

KEYWORDS
Tourism, Measurement methods, Tourism economic impact, Approach on tourism, GDP in tourism, Employment in tourism

JEL Classification
E01, E24, J20, M18

Introduction

Tourism, along with its specific activities, is mainly regarded from a social point of view, being associated with activities related to leisure, options of spending free time, vacation and trips. Yet the experience of the last few decades proved tourism to be of even greater influence in the economic domain, due to its capacity and great potential to contribute to the economic development at national or regional level.

Aspects like contribution to the GDP, raising the rate of employment and correcting the deficit of the Balance of Payments complete the socio-cultural role accomplished by tourism. A real problem arouses at the time to compare the tourism impact in the national economies of different countries, especially if the same measurement tool hasn't been used. Moreover, there is an acute shortage of information on the increasing role of tourism in national economies worldwide, hence the need for reliable data relative to the importance and magnitude of tourism using the same concepts, definitions and measurement approaches as other counties/industries

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1. Tourism – economic activity

In order to be able to analyze tourism, a good understanding of the concept's meaning is required.

As time passed by, as Jafari (2000) points out, the popular and professional meanings have changed: whereas earlier meanings focused on its social aspects, newer meanings have a much broader scope, involving the economic facets. This new perspective is probably the result of greater knowledge in recent decades of the immense dimensions of tourism, as it is truly a very complicated phenomenon.

In the first major writing about tourism (Mason, 2003), the *Travel and Tourism Encyclopedia*, from 1959, several historic dimensions of tourism were cited. Human movement is an innate characteristic demonstrated by mankind throughout history and early travel took place for many reasons – visit friends, curiosity, better living, pilgrimage, commerce, trade, and general wanderlust.

Evidence of the great power of travel motivation is its emergence and growth centuries ago in spite of many obstacles, such as discomfort, unreliability, threat from bandits, and many health hazards. However, it is only in the last 150 years, as travel became more affordable and less difficult, that some of those who travelled were prepared to openly admit that pleasure was one of the motivations of their journeys.

As recently as the 1960s, tourism was an activity in which reatively few participated regularly, and was primarly confined in Europe, North America and a small number of locations in other parts of the world (Mason 2003). International travel, prior to the 1960s, was still largely the preserve of a wealth priority who had the time as well as money to affrod long distance sea or air travel. Major changes in the second half of the twentieth century led to the rapid and massive growth of the phenomenon known as modern tourism. For example, these changes have contributed to the Pacific/East Asia becoming the fastest growing area for international tourism in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

In 1975, East Asia and the Pacific Region accounted for only 4 % of the international tourist arrivals, but by 1995 the share of world arrivals has increased to almost 15 % (Pearce 1999). It should be noted that this change has occured at a time when tourist numbers were growing globally. The increase in the share of international tourist arrivals in the Pacific Region therefore indicates a very significant increase in the number of actual tourists between 1975-1995.

There were approximately seventy-eight million visitors arrivals in the Pacific Region/East Asia in 1995 (Pearce 1999). This compares with approximately 100 million in the combined area of North and South America and 305 million in Europe, which with almost 60% of intl arrivals remained, at the end of the 20th century, the single most important region for intl travel arrivals (Pearce 1999).

As travel modes and quality increased dramatically and as research expanded (Mason, 2003), new interpretations of tourism emerged, in 1992 and recognizing the breadth of tourism, offering this definition:

Tourism is the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs.

In recent decades, the concept of tourism has broadened into holistic interpretations that have given rise to the modelling of tourism as a system, by Leipner in 1993, cited by Mason (2003).

The tourist industry consists of all those firms, organizations and facilities which are intended to serve the specific needs and wants of tourists

Key elements of this holistic and interrelated model include (Gunn 2002):

- tourism is not a discipline, insted is a multidisciplinary field
- tourism is generated by two major powers – demand and supply
- within demand is a diversity of traveler interests and abilities
- within supply are all the physical and program developments required to serve tourist
- tourism includes many geographic, economic, environmental, social and political dimensions.

A more recent definition, from the WTO in 1991, was created, primarily to assist those whose responsability it was to compile statistics in tourism. This definition reads as follows:

The activities of a person travelling outside his or her usual environemnt for less than a specified period of time whose main purpose of travel is other than for exercise of an activity remunerated from the place visited (WTO, 1991).

Neither of these definitions makes reference to the impacts of tourism. Impacts are key to any discussion of the planning and management of tourism. However, Jafari (2000) did include reference to impacts in his definition:

Tourism is the study of man away from his usual habitat, of the industry which responds to his needs and the impacts that both he and the industry have for the host socio-cultural, economic and physical environemnts.

Tourism is now a global industry involving hundreds of millions of international as well as domestic travelers each year. The WTO (2010) estimated that there were 880 million arrivals in 2009, although some of this activity may comprise the same travellers involved in more than one journy per year and hence the precise scale of tourism as an industry is in some doubt (Mason 2003). Tens of millions of people globally work directly in the industry and many more are employed indirectly. Hundreds of millions of people are on the receiving end of tourism activity as they live in what are termed destination areas, in supposed „host" populations. Millions of dollars are spent each year advertising and promoting holidays and tourism products (Gunn, 2002).

For this and many other reasons, tourism is a global matter, involving interdependences with many other economic branches.

Tourism, economic crisis and trends

The financial and economic crisis that hit the world economy in 2008 has a strong impact on tourism. During 2008, the crisis manifested by quarterly decreases in the OECD area GDP volume. The pace of decrease was accentuated in the end of 2008 and at the begining of 2009 (WTO, 2010). Acording to the OECD Economic Outlook published in June 2009, the whole OECD economic activity would have reached its minimum in the 3rd quarter of 2009 and a weak and fragile recovery could start to be seen in the 4th quarter. In the US and Japan, the recovery could take place a quarter ahead of the euro area.

In 2008 tourism jobs accompanied the general downturn, though not as abruptly as in the industrial sectors (OECD, 2009). On a yearly basis, jobs in accomodation and food services still rose by 0.6% in 2008 with regard to 2007, however, this was less than the rise of 1,3% for services as a whole.

The picture appeared rather contrasted between countries. Steep declines (2%) took place in New Zeeland, the Netherlands, Ireland, the Czech Republic, Japan and Iceland. On the other hand, sharp rises (2% or more) were registered in Portugal, Finalnd, Mexico, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany and Italy (OECD 2009).

In tourism (WTO, 2010), some similarities with the general pattern of the crisis can be observed, however, specific factors have also played a role on tourism activity, notably the outbreak of the influenza A/H1N1 virus at the begining of 2009 and the particular measures taken in many countries to support the sector. On other hand, divergences have to be pointed out between countries and types of tourism.

Globally (OECD 2009), four aspects of the crisis can be pointed out:

1. **International tourism suffered a more acute downturn than domestic tourism**. This is a well known pattern: international tourism is usually more volatile than domestic tourism. When the economic situation becomes dificult or uncertain, households tend to take their holidays in their countries rather than abroad. Another aspect of the volatility is the tendency to reduce the reservation delays (use of last minute reservations), eventually with the advantage of heavy discounts.

2. **Business travel was more severly hit than the leisure travel**. Facing a slump in the overall demand, businesses make efforts to limit their costs, particuarly the ones that are the easiest to control. On another hand, in the crisis, the global decline in private consumption expenses has apeared moderate, relative to other demand components.
3. **Hotels have registered downturns more than other type of acomodation**. This efect can partly be considered as a consequence of the decrease in business travel since the latter entails extensive use of hotels compared with other types of accomodation. Nevertheless, leisure travellers may also have at least partly shifted to other cheaper types of accomodation.
4. **Air transport suffered more than for other types of transport**. The strong limitations of international tourism particularly for business purposes with specific impacts on long distance flights can be seen as one of the main factors. Airlines were thus driven to limit their flight capacities.

Over the past 20 years (OECD 2009), tourism has been playing its part in the economic globalisation, due to three main factors: the dynamism of the world economy, which has seen new economic powers emerge while industrial countries have continued to exhibit apreciable growth and with it, rising incomes, the development of new and cheaper means od transport and the intensive use of information and comunication technologies, in tourism and their impact on value creation chains.

Yet the latest economic events have driven the international tourism trends into a completely different direction than expected previously. In 2008, different countries have experienced diiferent situations, ranging from exceptionally high growths (25%) of tourism arrivals in Turkey, 6.9% in Korea and 5.9% for Mexico and Austria (5.6%). The other countries suffered either a slowdown or a decline in their corresponding growth rates. The steepest declines concerned Poland (-13.5%), the Netherlands (-8.2%), Denmark (-5.6%), France (-3.2%) and Spain (-2.3%). Romania registered, as well as China, a decline, after a period of rapid growth (-5.5%).

In what the tourism economic branch is concerned, the main trends (WTO, 2010) are:

- *Domestic tourism will play a predominant role*. This, however, is depending on a number of factors, like the country size (the bigger a country, the more important dometic tourism is likely to be), the geographic location, accomodation capacity and points of atraction.
- *The performance of international tourism is closely linked to that of the world economy*
- *World tourism is shifting to the South and the East*
- *The share of air travel is growing*
- *Leisure and vacation travel dominates*
- *A tendency towards shorter stays will be notable*
- *The online reservation will continue to rise*

2. Limitations in accurately measuring the tourism economic impact

According to OECD (1992), tourism is not an industry in the traditional sense of the word, as industries are classified in accordance with the goods and services they produce, whereas tourism depends on the status of the customer, ie visitor (eg. consumption of a restaurant meal by a visitor is defined as tourism, while when the meal is consumed by a resident, its not tourism anymore). Moreover, as tourism draws its characteristic activities from a series of economic sectors, from different industries within the national economy, it also has a diverse impact on the national economy, difficult to accurately measure. What is more, different countries choose to define the impact of tourism on the GDP by taking into account different tourism related or characteristic sub sectors/braches of the national economy.

For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005) divides the GDP tourism impact in 3 different categories of industry: tourism characteristic, tourism connected and other industries. Therefore, the first and most important category is the one which relates to those particular industries which have at least 25% of their output consumed by visitors, here included: agency and tour operator services, taxi transport, air and water transport, motor vehicle hiring, accommodation, cafes, restaurants and food outlets. The tourism connected industries are those not classified as characteristic that have products which are consumed by visitors in volumes which are significant, whilst the last category includes those branches of the national economy which provide outputs to tourism not included in neither the characteristic, nor the connected industries.

There are real difficulties facing the task of establishing without mistake all the contribution that tourism activities have in the GDP, at the moment to establish which income is purely touristic or possibly made by a resident, whichever country involved. The first big obstacle is the accuracy of the information required, as it is complicated to clearly separate the purely touristic activities from the ones regarding the residents (for example making the difference between an expenditure realized in a restaurant and one made by a resident).

Another sore point comes from the fact that not all the services are included in the market, as for example the expenditure realized in the public sector in order to improve the transport infrastructure or the beach facilities, for tourist use (Nistoreanu, 2005).

Especially for larger geographic entities, eg regional or national level (Reilling, 1992), it becomes much more difficult to accurately measure the economic impacts of tourism. The basic measurement problem stems from the fact that most tourist expenditures occur at retail establishments such as restaurants, sporting goods stores, amusement areas or other type of commercial unit, whose clientele also include local residents, mainly by its position.

The owners of such businesses usually have only a vague estimate of the proportion of annual receipts that is derived from tourists versus local residents (Reiling, 1992). Indeed, this proportion often changes from weekday to weekend and from season to season.

It is known as a fact that, in order to be considered in both the tourism GDP contribution and as a factor on the labor market, a business should have a major part of its activity on touristic grounds – hotels, restaurants, transporters, etc. some countries have succeeded to, over the years, reduce to minimum the error in measuring the GDP contribution of tourism, yet there is still a long way, especially for the emergent countries, new on the international tourism destinations market.

Similarly as in the case of problems arising at the time to accurately establish the contribution of the tourism activities to the national GDP formation, error in deriving the influence/importance/part of those on the labor market is ultimately bound to fall through.

The cause of this situation goes far beyond the main economic parameters, to the lack of precision in defining/dissecting the purely tourist sub sectors, as tourism activities are bound, by their nature, to imbed with others, considered non-touristic. Although most of the worldwide economies, which have a strong far back tourism presence, have found ways of delimiting the tourism specific activities, and therefore the income and other benefits deriving from the same, there is still a long way to undergo.

In the precise case of employment, probably the biggest impediment in establishing without doubt the exact number of persons engaged in tourist activities, is the lack of an tourist sector in the "by the book" sense of the word, eg the , sanitation or education systems (Garcia Sanchez, 2010). What is generally considered the tourism sector is in fact a conglomerate of activities from other economic branches, ie businesses that have a majority of the income from tourist related sources.

Moreover, once analyzing a certain tourism related economic branch, delimiting which businesses are involved in tourist activities is hazardous, as for example a restaurant situated in a hotel lobby could be also open for the local public, thereby there would eventually be non-touristic related operation. Also, the local businesses, resident customers intended, could from time to time be visited also by travelers. A risk free delimitation would require to establish, step by step if each customer was a resident or a non-resident, which is extremely difficult and constitutes a rather nonrealistic approach to the matter.

There are also big between-countries differences in the way they account and consider activities from other economic branches as being touristic specific or non-touristic. According to Reiling (1992), in cases where secondary data are available on a monthly basis, such as state employment statistics broken down by counties and municipalities, one can derive reasonable estimates of the proportion of employment and business receipts that are from tourists versus local. Such estimates are derived intuitively from graphics and assume a base level of trade from local residents. Sales or employment above this base level are then attributed to tourism. This type of analysis is useful at the state or sub-state level, but the cooperation of the state commerce or economic development agency is needed before the monthly employment and sales data can be obtained.

In the exact example of Spain, according to Garcia Sanchez (2010), employment in tourism is comprehended in economic activity branches like hotels, restaurants, passenger transport, tourism/travel agencies and tourism operators and other entertaining activities related to tourism.

Also, according to the same author/source, a recent change of methodology nature in the National Classification of the Economic Activities has brought about an even greater change for the tourism accounting, reducing the risk to overestimate the tourist transport, by separating the employment attached to merchandise from the passenger one. The 2009 modification took the tourism impact on labor market one step further, by creating not only the possibility of its better delimitation, but also by giving a clearer image on the importance this sector has in the Spanish case.

3. Approaches on tourism impact in the national economy

The economic branch of tourism has been and still is playing an important role in the economy as a whole, at macro level. The degree of importance has grown or diminished over the years, yet it certainly proved itself to be a notable factor of economic growth, no matter the level. Also, the tourism sector maintains codependent relationships with other sectors, mutually sustaining themselves, like transportation or lodging.

Besides the importance of tourism at the moment of the GDP formation (Nistoreanu, 2005), the sector has a great contribution to the added value, as well as to stimulating the production from other areas. Specialty studies have evidenced the fact that other economic branches' activity is greatly determined by the touristic sector.

Tourism can also be regarded as a medium of diversifying the economical structure of a country, i.e. because of the process of adapting to the tourists needs, new activities are created within the national economic and social spectrum, like entertainment activities.

Tourism demand and offer, the operations it implies the successive effects of the production and consume of tourist services, all in all give the *tourism multiplier effect.* Tourism not only creates jobs in the tertiary sector, but also encourages growth in the remaining two, hence creating an effect in which an increase in spending produces an increase in the national level of income and consumption, greater than the initial amount spent. For example, it is considered that for each dollar spent in tourism activities, the tourism sector indirectly generates 7 dollars for the US's state (Bran, 1995).

The effects of the tourism activities can be divided in 3 different subcategories (Minciu, 2000). The first one comprehends the direct effects, which consist of increasing the level of income in the touristic sector (wages, hotel profits, restaurant profits), as a direct effect of the expenditure realized by the tourists. The second subcategory consists of the indirect effects of the tourism activities, ie the effects it has on other economic sectors, which produce goods and services the touristic sector uses in order to fulfill at a competitive level the needs of its clients.

The third subcategory of effects are the ones which disperse at national economy level, as the revenues of those directly involved in the tourism activities, as well as of those working in the sectors which produce goods and services, sectors thereas related to the touristic one, are reinvested. So we are witnessing a process of multiplying the aggregate demand at macroeconomic level.

Tourism is a powerful economic force providing employment, foreigh exchange, income and tax revenue. The generators of economic impact for a city, a state, a province, a country, or a destination area are visitors, their expenditures, and the multiplier effect, the economic impact of tourism spending is a function of the numbers of domestic and intl visitors and their expenditures. Because of the economic importance of tourism, the WTO maintains statistics by region and country on tourism arrivals/visitors and both tourism expenditures (what a country spends) and receipts (what a country receives from visitor expenditures). Tourism destinations are becoming increasingly competitive as more and more destinations look at tourism to become the new economic generator replacing declining activity in agriculture, mining and manufactirung.

The economic impact of tourism (Goeldner et al, 2006) was dramatically demonstrated by the events of September 11, 2001. As a consequence of pervasive anxiety by these events, people cut back on their travel, economic forecasts were put on hold, airline, lodging, tour operators and travel agent revenue declined and widespread layoffs occured throughout the industry. Thus the very directly and real economic impact of tourism was realized. However, over the long run, it is belived that travel will recover and the 2020 forecasts will be realized.

National Accounts System – instrument for reflecting tourism in the national economy (Spain-Romania)

The System of National Accounts (UN, 2001) consists of an integrated set of macroeconomic accounts, balance sheets and tables based on internationally agreed concepts, definitions, classifications and accounting rules. Together, these principles provide a comprehensive accounting framework within which economic data can be compiled and presented in a format that is designed for purposes of economic analysis, decision-taking and policy-making.

Being the most comprehensive macroeconomic standard, it also serves also as the main reference point for statistical standards of related statistics such as the balance of payments, financial and government finance statistics.

National accounts or national account systems (NAS) provide thus a complete and consistent conceptual framework for measuring the economic activity of a nation (or other geographic area in the broader term social accounts). These include detailed underlying measures that rely on double-entry accounting. By construction such accounting makes the totals on both sides of an account equal even though they each measure different characteristics (UN, 2001). While sharing many common principles with business accounting, national accounts are firmly based on economic concepts.

National accounts (UN 2004) broadly present the production, income and expenditure activities of the economic actors (corporations, government, households) in an economy, including their relations with other countries' economies, and their wealth. They present both flows during a period and stocks at the end of a period, ensuring that the flows are fully reconciled with the stocks. National accounts also include measures of the stocks and flows of financial assets and liabilities (commonly called "financial accounts" or "flow of funds" accounts).

There are a number of aggregate measures in the national accounts, most notably gross domestic product or GDP - which is the most widely used measure of aggregate economic activity in a period - disposable income, saving and investment. These aggregate measures and their development over time are generally of strongest interest to economic policymakers, although the detailed national accounts contain a rich source of information for economic analysis, for example in the input-output tables which show how industries interact with each other in the production process.

The accounts (INS, 2007) are derived from a wide variety of statistical source data including surveys, administrative and census data, and regulatory data, which are integrated and harmonised in the conceptual framework. They are usually compiled by national statistical offices and/or central banks in each country, though this is not always the case, and may be released on both an annual and (less detailed) quarterly frequency.

The original motivation for the development of national accounts and the systematic measurement of employment, was the need for accurate measures of aggregate economic activity (UN, 2004). This was made more pressing by the Great Depression and as a basis for Keynesian macroeconomic stabilisation policy and wartime economic planning. The first efforts to develop such measures were undertaken in the late 1920s and 1930s, notably by Colin Clark and Simon Kuznets. Richard Stone led later contributions. The first formal national accounts in the United States were in 1947, and national accounts developed in many European countries during the 1940s and early 1950s.

Main components

The presentation of national accounts data (UN, 2004) may vary by country (commonly, aggregate measures are given greatest prominence), however the main national accounts include the following accounts for the economy as a whole and its main economic actors.

1 - Current accounts:

- production accounts which record the value of domestic output and the goods and services used up in producing that output. The balancing item of the accounts is value added, which is equal to GDP when expressed for the whole economy at market prices and in gross terms;
- income accounts, which show primary and secondary income flows - both the income generated in production (e.g. wages and salaries) and distributive income flows (predominantly the redistributive effects of government taxes and social benefit

payments). The balancing item of the accounts is disposable income ("National Income" when measured for the whole economy);

- expenditure accounts, which show how disposable income is either consumed or saved. The balancing item of these accounts is saving.

2 - Capital accounts, which record the net accumulation, as the result of transactions, of non-financial assets; and the financing, by way of saving and capital transfers, of the accumulation. Net lending/borrowing is the balancing item for these accounts

3 - Financial accounts, which show the net acquisition of financial assets and the net incurrence of liabilities. The balance on these accounts is the net change in financial position.

4 - Balance sheets, which record the stock of assets, both financial and non-financial, and liabilities at a particular point in time. Net worth is the balance from the balance sheets (United Nations, 1993).

Tourism in the National Accounts System

The place that tourism occupies in the global economy is unquestionable, yet the methods of its quantification vary from one country to another . Tourism has impacts an relates to a long series of economic branches, and the level of the impact varies greatly not only on a inter-statal basis, but sometimes even in different regions from the same country.

The tourism, although not a well defined industry like many others in the national economy, it is still reflected in the National Accounts System. The degree of accuracy of the process of reflecting the tourism impact on the national economy was rather low before the new instrument aroused in the last decade: the Satelite Accounts for Tourism, described in the next subchapter.

Spain has implemented this new tool in the year 2002, after the TSE pilot in the year 2000. Ever since, yearly compilations of data and consequent explanations are issued every year by the National Institute of Tourism, Spain, reflecting in an accurate manner the role tourism has had over the last period in the Spanish economy. Also, the methods used to recopile data are being updated and improved time passing, as shown in the latest editions of the TSA in Spain.

Romania is to adopt in the future period the new tool of measuring tourism in the national economy, after the issuing of the TSA Pilot in the year of 2006, with forecasts to 2016. Implementing the TSA instrument in Romania would bring great benefits to the sector, as at the present time, there is little accuracy in determining the real impact tourism has in the Romanian economy. In the National Accounts System tourism is presented without doubt only in the form of the Hotels and Restaurants related figures. Nevertheless, tourism activities comprehend many more branches, like transport, tour-operators, recreational activities, etc., but the distinction between the tourism-related activities and the non-resident activities of the same kind is not to be found (INS, 2007)

The system of Satelite Accounts in tourism, main instrument of evaluation of the economic dimension of the tourism activity

The importance and influence of the tourism activities are unquestionable all around the world, in the world macro economy. But, as time passed by, different economies have chosen or discovered different ways of measuring this importance, depending on and according to a series of various factors, characteristic to each country or region in particular.

The problems and difficulties arousing from the impossibility of fully comprehending and quantifying of the contribution of each of the tourism related activities to the overall economic development, are many and apply to every economy.

The main problem (WTO, 2000) comes from the amalgam of industries such as transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, recreation, entertainment or travel agencies that tourism encompasses. Some economies, usually the ones with a long tourism tradition, like the West European countries, chose to measure the impact of tourism on their national activities in as accurate a manner as possible, trying to reduce to a minimum the marginal errors. Yet there are many nations and national economies, where tourism hasn’t always been as important, this fact being a compound of various factors, not all tourism related. One of these reasons is the way the outcome of the tourism activities/sectors/industry is reflected in the national accounts of a country.

In the exact case of Romania, there is little information to handle in an economic impact of tourism related studies, as there is no distinguishing between, e.g. the merchandise transport and passenger transport, the travel agencies activity and other revenue-creating activities, etc. The only tourism sub sector, generally recognized as a tourism characteristic, is the Hotel and Restaurants one, which is highlighted in the System of National Accounts, in both the GDP contribution and the importance on the labor market, in statistic figures (INS, 2008).

Since 1995, the World Tourism Organization has been advancing the development of the Tourist Satellite Account project in order to promote the harmonization and comparability of the tourism statistics necessary for measuring and analyzing the impact of tourism. As approved by the United Nations in March 2000 (WTO, 2000), the TSA, i.e. Tourism Satellite Account is a type of Satellite Account system developed to measure the size of the tourism sub sectors that are not defined as such in the National Accounts. This new tool is designed as a standard framework for organizing statistical data on tourism, as well as a powerful instrument for designing economic policies related to tourism development.

The TSA is thus a statistical instrument (WTO, 2000), designed to measure the goods and services both tourism and non-tourism alike, according to international standards of concepts, classifications and definitions, which will allow for valid comparisons with other industries and eventually from country to country and between groups of countries.

The first step is always the most important, therefore, the very first measure to be taken refers to the exact definition of tourism, as the concept has been described over the years as the „activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for no more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes, not related with an excise of an remunerated activity within the place visited" (TSA: Recommended Methodological Framework, 2001). Thus definition has been adapted over the years to reflect what was considered the main element in the tourism industry: the visitor, and therefore studies in the field have always been focused on the tourists activities. However, it is this particular angle which has led to a broadening of the perspectives on tourism, as the number of the above mentioned activities became vaster, as well as the acknowledgement of their multiple and broad-reaching implications.

The traditional concept of tourism was therefore extended beyond its exclusive above mentioned focus, in order to encompass complementary elements, like: tourism gross fixed capital formation, tourism collective consumption. As follows, the countries implementing the TSA, according to the TSA Manual of the WTO (2000), are able to measure:

- tourism's contribution to the GDP
- tourism's ranking compared to other economic sectors
- the number of jobs created by tourism in an economy
- the amount of the tourism investment
- tax revenues generated by tourism industries
- tourism consumption
- tourism's impact on a nation's balance of payments
- characteristics of tourism human resources.

Moreover, the WTO has prepared guidelines and materials to assist in the development of the TSAs in countries with different levels of technical skills, needs and experience. Throughout the years to follow, the idea of the new statistical, tourism focused tool has taken shape, being as it was presented during conferences (1999 Enzo Paci World Conference on the Measurement of the Economic Impact of Tourism, in Nice), working groups (1999 WTO-OECE-Eurostat Working Group), and upon that, by the adoption of the TSA methodology by the UN in the year of 2000, followed by different countries adopting the TSA into their national economy system of accounts. (WTO, 2001)

One of those countries is Spain, who first introduced the new statistical study system in June 2002, as the Cuentas Satelite del Turismo Espanol, designed as a satellite of the main National Accounts System and has been prepared on a yearly basis by the Subdireccion General de Cuentas Nacionales from the Statistics National Institute of Spain.

Being as it is a set of accouns and tables, based on the methodological principles of national accounting, which present the evolution and interdependences of the different economic parameters of tourism, the Spanish Tourism Satelite Accounts (STSA) provide relevant information about the country's economic development from tourism activities, from both the supply and demand (IET, 2010).

Conclusions

According to the TSA pilot study from 2009, estimations were of tourism activities reaching a level of 5.8% in the GDP formation and a 6.9% importance on the labor market.

A country with a tourism tradition that goes far back in time, Spain is currently the second most important touristic destination in the world rankings, following France. With a market share of 6,9%, i.e. 58,1 millions tourist arrivals in 2009, is yet bound to decrease to the 4 place by 2020, situation caused mainly by the changes in consumers preferences and the world trend of developing new forms of tourism and thereby new ways of spending vacations.

Tourism activities generated about 11% of the GDP in 2010 and have a 12,4% share in the employed population, corresponding to about 2,7 million persons who work in different tourism activities. Altogether, over the years tourism has been a very important factor in correcting the current account deficit of the national Balance of Payments. A good example in that direction is the 2009 surplus of EUR 27.444, due to tourism.

Until 2009 the economy of Spain had been regarded as one of the most dynamic within the EU, attracting significant amounts of foreign investment. During the last four decades the Spanish tourism industry has grown to become the second biggest in the world, worth approximately 40 billion Euros, about 5% of GDP, in 2009. Spain's economy had been credited with having avoided the virtual zero growth rate of some of its largest partners in the EU.

In fact, the country's economy had created more than half of all the new jobs in the European Union over the five years ending 2010, a process that is rapidly being reversed.

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